

Assignment Discovery Online Curriculum Buddhism and the Dalai Lama

Curriculum Focus

Religion and Culture

Grade level

9-12

Duration

One or two class periods

Objectives

Students will

- explore the teachings of the Dalai Lama, and
- apply these teachings to situations that could take place in their own lives.

Materials

- Paper and pencils
- Computer with Internet access

Procedures

1. Begin the lesson with a discussion about the Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of the Tibetan people. Tell students that he escaped from Tibet in 1959 after the Chinese invaded Tibet and he has lived in India ever since. In 1989, he received the Nobel Prize for Peace in recognition of his efforts to negotiate peace between Tibet and China.
2. Hold a discussion about the teachings of the Dalai Lama. Explain that his message is to promote compassion, tolerance, and a sense of internal peace. Emphasize this point with video segments of the Dalai Lama discussing his philosophy. Point out how his teachings draw from the teachings of Buddhism.
3. Divide students into pairs. Have the pairs find out more about the Dalai Lama and his teachings. Suggest that they refer to the following Web sites:

<http://www.top-religion.com/9016-Dalai%20Lama/teachings.htm>

<http://www.gluckman.com/DalaiLama.html>

<http://www.dalailama.com/html/training.html>

http://www.beliefnet.com/story/31/story_3167_1.html

<http://www.tibet.com/DL/nobelaccept.html>

4. Allow students enough time to become more familiar with the Dalai Lama's teachings. Ask whether his ideas could be applied to the students' lives. On the board, write the situations listed below. Have students discuss how these teachings could guide them in resolving these dilemmas.

- How could the teachings of the Dalai Lama help if a student gets a “D” on a report card?
 - How could his teachings help if students are teasing another student because of the way he or she looks, talks, or dresses?
 - How could his teachings help a student in a situation in which everyone else is drinking or smoking?
 - How could his teachings help students come to terms with the potential of terrorist attacks in their own country?
 - How could his teachings help students address the needs of someone in their community who has lost a job and is having financial trouble?
5. Give students enough time in class to think about these situations. Then have each student write a brief summary of their findings and conclusions and present a report to the class. Did most students reach similar conclusions?
 6. End the lesson by discussing other ways the Dalai Lama’s ideas could be applied to the students’ lives. Ask students if they feel they could use the ideas in difficult situations. Ask if they think the ideas have particular relevance in the uncertainty in the world.

Evaluation

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students’ work during this lesson.

3 points: Students were highly engaged in class discussions, fully grasping the teachings of the Dalai Lama; reports indicated that they found interesting ways to apply his teachings to different situations.

2 points: Students participated in class discussions and had some understanding of the teachings of the Dalai Lama; reports indicated they were able to apply his teachings to different situations.

1 point: here Students participated minimally in class discussions and had little understanding of the teachings of the Dalai Lama; reports indicated they had difficulty applying his teachings to different situations.

Vocabulary

Buddhism

Definition: A religion of eastern and central Asia that emerged from the teachings of Gautama Buddha, who said that suffering is a part of life and can be overcome through mental and moral self-purification

Context: The Dalai Lama has elaborated upon the teachings of Buddha and has used them in his search for world peace.

compassion

Definition: The ability to consider other people’s well-being as well as our own

Context: The Dalai Lama teaches that we should always consider the effect of our actions on other people and to show compassion for all living things.

Dalai Lama

Definition: The spiritual leader of the Tibetan people

Context: In addition to being a strong leader, the Dalai Lama is mischievous and has a good sense of humor.

dharma

Definition: The essence of the teachings of Buddha; a religious, as opposed to a secular, approach to life

Context: By living a noble life and developing an optimistic mental attitude, people can bring dharma into their lives.

Academic Standards

This lesson plan addresses the following thematic standards:

- I. Culture
- IV. Individual Development and Identity
- V. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

Credit

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